

KIRK FRANKLIN

Kirk Franklin (b. 1972) took the Contemporary Christian Music world by storm. His first two albums sold a combined 3 million copies. At age eleven, Franklin was appointed music minister at Mt. Rose Baptist Church in Ft. Worth, Texas. It was then that he began to write, arrange, and rearrange Christian music, and his technique was worldly from the beginning. “My first triumph,” recalls Franklin, “was turning Elton John’s ‘Benny & The Jetts’ into a gospel tune” (“Kirk Franklin and the Family,” <http://www.gofishnet.com>). We would not call that a triumph; we would call it a disgrace. Why do we need to take music created by a homosexual rock star and attempt to turn it into something associated with the holy Savior?

In his biography, Franklin admits that he lived in deep sin during his teenage years and into his early 20s, even while directing music in churches and performing Gospel music in a wide range of forums. He fathered a son out of wedlock in 1990, and as late as 1995 he was still living a promiscuous lifestyle. He formed a CCM group called The Family in 1992, and by 1995 they had produced two hit Gospel albums and had won Dove, Stellar, and other awards. He was living in fornication all of this time. Of those days he testifies:

“But there I was, in the odd situation of getting a little bit of exposure and popularity and a little bit of a reputation while my life was still a mess. ...my lifestyle and THE CASUAL PROMISCUITY THAT SEEMS TO COME ALONG WITH THIS CRAZY BUSINESS was just killing me. ... my flesh was killing me. ... By January 1995 I knew I couldn’t go on with the life I was leading. I didn’t want to hurt God, and I knew I’d already been doing that to some degree. ... I know what it’s like to be onstage, performing God’s music and thinking about who I’ll be going home with that night” (Kirk Franklin, *Church Boy*, pp. 136, 175, 176, 195).

Franklin alludes to widespread immorality, even homosexuality, within the Gospel music industry.

“In the church, especially the African-American church during the seventies and eighties, HOMOSEXUALITY was a big problem. It still is in some places. IT’S A PROBLEM TODAY IN GOSPEL MUSIC—A MAJOR CONCERN—AND EVERYBODY KNOWS IT. ... It seems that more than half the young people involved in dance, music, and the theater are openly gay. ... and the gospel music scene has not been exempt from that” (Ibid., pp. 39, 40).

“That stuff [promiscuity] wasn’t happening because that’s what I wanted. It was happening because I thought that’s just the way it was. A lot of the pastors and preachers and music leaders I had known were doing it. And I honestly thought for a time that that’s what you were supposed to do” (Ibid., p. 175).

We cannot fathom how Franklin could grow up in churches and think that immorality is justified. This sounds like a convenient excuse. Be that as it may, note that Franklin plainly testifies that fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are rampant in Gospel music circles.

In 1997, Franklin and Nu Nation had a hit titled “Stomp.” It was very popular on secular charts. To a strong “hip-hop” beat they sang that Jesus’ love made them want to dance and rock and roll: “It gets me high, up to the sky/ And when I think about Your goodness/ It makes me wanna stomp.”

One of the performers for “Stomp” was rapper Cheryl “Salt” James of Salt ‘N’ Pepa. She has blasphemously stated in interviews that she believes in “Jesus and recreational sex.” Franklin

would doubtless claim that he is walking in Jesus' footsteps by befriending the world, but Jesus lived a holy life, called sinners to repentance, warned them to sin no more, and warned them of eternal Hell, which would put a wet blanket on any worldly rock party! We don't see Kirk Franklin and his crowd doing this. Their "christ" is the non-judgmental false christ of *The Shack*.

Franklin claims that music is neutral and that any music can glorify God. "This album [1998] represents every style of music in our culture—jazz, gospel, blues, hip-hop, rock, ballads, blues, classical, you name it. They say music is universal, but the message is specific. If this music is universal, it's all ours; it's the message within it that makes the difference. ... The gospel is the message, and as long as the music is dedicated to Jesus, He makes it pure" (Franklin, *Church Boy*, pp. 225, 226).

We would ask Franklin two questions. First, where does the Bible say that the Lord Jesus purifies anything that is dedicated to Him, regardless of the character of the thing being dedicated? Paul warned the Corinthians that to take things from idolatry and to intermingle them into their Christian lives is an abomination to God (1 Cor. 10:18-23). Christ does not sanctify evil things; He calls us to avoid such things (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11). Franklin and other CCM musicians refuse to believe that rock music is evil, but tens of thousands of men and women of God are convinced that they are wrong and that they are doing great damage to the cause of Christ by attempting to use the world's music in the service of Christ. If rock music is evil as many believe, it is unacceptable to God and is not sanctified simply because it is dedicated to Christ. Where does the Bible say that only the sincerity and devotion of the minister is important? Was Moses not sincere when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it? Yet God judged him and refused to allow him to go into the Promised Land (Num. 20:7-14). Was Uzzah not sincere when he steadied the cart holding the ark? Yet God struck him dead (1 Sam. 6:6-7). We would also ask Franklin why the Devil, the god of this world, is not in the music business if, as he alleges, all music belongs to the Christian. In light of the fact that the Devil is the "god of this world" and the "prince that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:2) and in light of the fact that music is one of the greatest influences in modern society, it is *certain* that Satan is in the music business in a big way.

Franklin is ecumenical and tolerant about Bible doctrine. He believes in Pentecostal tongues and prophecies (Franklin, *Church Boy*, p. 214), and at one point he was music minister at a Seventh-day Adventist church. In his biography he says nothing to warn his readers about the doctrinal heresies of Seventh-day Adventism (*Church Boy*, p. 122). (The *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* exposes the danger of SDA doctrine.)

Franklin's unscriptural philosophy of Christian ministry is evident from the following statement:

"We're just trying to create an atmosphere, because we know that society has been turned off by organized religion. We know that the people aren't trying to hear about Christianity. Nobody's really trying to hear about that. We present it in a way that it's not corny, it's not boring, it's not for your grandma" (Kirk Franklin, Sept. 11, 1997, <http://www.mtv.com/mtv/news/gallery/gods970911.html>).

Franklin, like many Contemporary Christian musicians, considers traditional Bible Christianity as it has been practiced in the past as boring and corny. He believes the gospel of Jesus Christ has to be made cool and palatable to the world. This is contrary to what the Lord's apostles practiced and taught. They didn't the gospel in a worldly package to make it more acceptable to the unsaved. They didn't use worldly methods to attract men to a holy gospel. The CCM philosophy is confusion. When God grants men conviction of their sin and repentance, they are ready to turn from the world and its vain pleasures. They yearn for something new, something holy. When the Lord gave me repentance at age 23, frankly, I was *ready* to sing the traditional songs and hymns. I still loved rock music for a short time, but I also knew that it was intimately associated with evil and I yearned for something different, something holy and separate from this wicked world. I did not find the old hymns boring or corny. In fact, I still enjoy the very songs and hymns my godly maternal grandmother loved. Though I was a rock-loving hippie I didn't need any type of rock music to draw me to the gospel, and I didn't need rock music to help me worship God.

Franklin defends his close relationship with the licentious world of secular rock by claiming to be a light in the darkness. His philosophy of witnessing, though, is not scriptural. He holds the non-judgmental philosophy of the ecumenical movement.

"Sometimes I'm an ear. They [secular musicians] know they're talking to somebody who's not going to judge them. ... You know, to reach the secular world, you don't beat them over the head with the Bible. You do it the way Jesus did it. You feed them first, then you preach to them" (Kirk Franklin, *CCM Magazine*, December 1998, p. 38).

This is a false statement. In His earthly ministry, Christ preached to people long before He ever fed them. The first thing the Lord Jesus Christ did in His ministry was cry out "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). Christ's "negative" preaching eventually caused the crowds to stop following Him (John 6:61-66). Christ preached righteousness and holiness (Mat. 5-7). The unsaved world has always found such preaching to be "judgmental." The fact that it is God's judgment and not man's makes no difference to those who are rebellious. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." If Franklin truly followed in Christ's footsteps he would not be so popular in the secular music field.

Franklin mocks Bible-believing Christians who do not like his rock music. His 1998 album, *The Nu Nation Project*, contains a skit titled "The Car," which depicts someone searching for more traditional gospel music on the radio. When the person comes across Franklin's rock music, instead, he snorts: "Oh, Lord Jesus! That's that old Kirk Franklin mess ... I'd know that old filth anywhere." Franklin and his fellow CCM artists intend to rock on regardless of who they offend and regardless of whether or not they cause young people to go astray into the filthy world of rock music because of the bridges built by CCM.

Like many other CCM musicians, Franklin slanders "old fashioned" Bible-believing Christians as "hard-nosed traditionalists" and "legalists."

"The only thing those hard-nosed traditionalists can see is that these musicians are really wild and seem pretty far out for gospel singers. Ever since that first meeting back in 1992 when we laid out the basic outlines

of the Family, we've been concerned about the legalism in the church. We've been hurt by it, but I can honestly say it's a lot better today than it was five years ago. Those who live by rigid legalism may not be able to see the obvious. And too often they can't even see how their attitudes are driving young people out of the church and into the streets and the gangs and the clubs" (Kirk Franklin, *Church Boy*, p. 173).

This statement is laughable in light of Franklin's immorality and the immorality practiced by other members of his group. (Franklin's keyboard player, Bobby Sparks, has been with Franklin's group since its inception, but he did not "give his life to the Lord" until August 1997. Prior to that Sparks was living in deep sin, yet he was playing Gospel music.) Franklin has admitted this is rife, and the cause is not some sort of "legalism." The cause is not churches taking the Bible too seriously and separating from the world too strictly; the cause is churches being too much like the world and not taking holiness and separation seriously enough. Those who take their stand on the Bible and preach against loving the world and who preach holy living are slanderously called legalists. We would remind Franklin that it is not legalism for a saved-by-grace believer to seek to obey God's commands and to preach obedience and holiness. Note what the Lord Jesus said about the commandments:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:18,19).

Further, Franklin confuses persecution with correction. He says he has been hurt by those who criticize his lifestyle and music. It is never pleasant to be corrected for sin, but such correction is not persecution nor is it hurtful (except to the old sinful, proud self). A father rebukes his children because he loves them. The Lord Jesus rebukes those He loves (Revelation 3:19), and we are warned that His correction is not pleasant and we must beware of fainting under it (Heb. 12:5). One of the preacher's duties is to reprove and rebuke (2 Timothy 4:1-2). The Scriptures are given by God "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Those who repent when they are rebuked learn to appreciate the correction, but those who harden their hearts and refuse to repent hate those who rebuke them. The book of Proverbs frequently warns that a person's attitude toward correction reveals the condition of his heart and determines whether he is wise or foolish.

"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" (Prov. 9:8).

"He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth" (Prov. 10:17).

"A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (Prov. 15:5).

"Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Prov. 15:10).

"A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise" (Prov. 15:12).

"A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool" (Prov. 17:10).

The world recognizes Franklin's defiant attitude. A review of his 1998 album in the *Dallas Morning News* (Oct. 2, 1998) is titled "Rebellious Franklin Pledges Nu Nation under God." The article observes: "The Fort Worth rapper-songwriter-producer spends two tracks on his new CD,

‘The Nu Nation Project,’ reminding listeners what a rebel and outcast he is. ... He’s a provocateur and proud of it.”

Kirk Franklin contributed to his 2007 album the song “Interpretations,” which is a tribute to the rock group Earth Wind & Fire. The album was released in March 2007. Franklin has also co-edited a video with Maurice White, founder of Earth Wind & Fire. This rock group is heavily into the occult. Terry Watkins warns: “There’s no mistaking the new age/satanic influence of the group Earth Wind and Fire. They blatantly flaunt occult symbolism, such as the all-seeing eye of Horus, zodiac signs, pyramids, hexagrams, the Egyptian ankh, and many more on their albums. To show the ultimate blasphemy, they even name one of their albums ‘I AM’--a name reserved for God! The album ‘I AM’ has a cross of Christ in the center with an embryo and an old man in the center with a temple in the foreground. Their song ‘Serpentine Fire’ is based on the New Age teachings found in the Shah Kriza Yogi Meditation cult” (*Christian Rock: Blessing or Blasphemy*). The Earth Wind & Fire album *Spirit* pictures Maurice White and the other members of the band in a trance-like state surrounded by pyramids. Earth Wind and Fire’s album *Powerlight* promotes Hindu yoga.

Kirk Franklin is the blind leading the blind, and the spirit behind his music is not the holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth.